United Nations ST/IC/2008/36

Secretariat

11 July 2008

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters in 2008, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 and ST/AI/2000/1, as amended by ST/AI/2003/1.

2. A competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters will be held tentatively on **25 and 26 November 2008** in New York, Geneva and other locations, according to the number and location of qualified candidates invited to take the examination and the availability of the necessary technical equipment. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Chinese-language interpreters will be filled. When vacancies occur, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as to qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or a special mission are considered external candidates for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Chinese-language interpreter posts as they occur in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Bangkok and Nairobi. Assignments are subject to rotation and interpreters may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations, according to the needs of the Organization. Interpreters are expected to serve a **minimum of five years** in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 to 14 below.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2009.

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4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Chinese as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Chinese and English. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files;

(c) Hold at least a three-year first-level degree from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Chinese is the language of instruction, and have 200 days of experience as conference interpreters or 200 days of work experience in the field of translation, editing, verbatim reporting or related fields. Alternatively, candidates must hold a university degree from a recognized school of interpretation. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, admit a candidate graduating from a university whose principal language of instruction is other than Chinese, provided that he or she has adequate secondary education qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Chinese.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable length of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who are not serving on 100-series appointments and who will have reached the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications, **3 September 2008**, will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement for a university degree from a university or institution of equivalent status, referred to in paragraph 4 (c) above, may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary education qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary education qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Chinese, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified applicants, based on a review of the qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. Candidates convoked to the interview will be required to submit evidence of degrees and/or relevant experience prior to convocation. **The Board's decisions are final**.

8. The examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Chinese from recordings of three speeches delivered in English (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into English from recordings of three speeches delivered in Chinese (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to interpret. Candidates' claims to Chinese as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

9. On the basis of the results of this examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to a competency-based interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess whether she or he possesses the competencies required for the position. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview should **not** assume that they will be offered an assignment.

10. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. **The Board's recommendations are not subject to appeal**. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results.

11. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are strongly encouraged to accept it, as declining may affect their prospects of receiving a subsequent offer.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Chinese-language interpreters for a trial period of two years. Staff members at the P-1 level or below will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

13. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management will be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their interpretation functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

14. In order to service meetings of the Security Council or the General Assembly, interpreters are often called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, **no later than 3 September 2008**, to:

2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters
Examinations and Tests Section
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, New York 10017
Fax: 1 212 963 3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early. Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, such staff members are requested to return their applications directly to the Examinations and Tests Section of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by 3 September 2008, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section.

Application (for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat only)

2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language?[a] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 form or, preferably, a PHP form, and attach it to this application. Describe your educational background and work experience (giving dates and length of time) in the areas of interpretation, translation, editing or verbatim reporting, if any.

Applications submitted without either a P.11 or PHP form will NOT be considered.

[a] "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to interpret. Candidates' claims to Chinese as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ **Signature** _____

(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above.)

I have read information circular ST/IC/2008/36 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language interpreters and am recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a Chinese-language interpreter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 12 to 14 of that circular.

Date _____ **Signature** _____

(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above.)